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C O N F I D E N T I A L ZAGREB 001718

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [KNNP](#) [MNUC](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [PHSA](#) [KTIA](#) [HR](#) [NATO](#)

SUBJECT: CROATIA ORGANIZING FOR PSI PARTICIPATION

REF: A)ZAGREB 1588 B)STATE 173288

Classified By: Poloff Justin Friedman, reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

SUMMARY AND COMMENT

1. (C) Poloff met with MFA Head of Cooperative Security Section Drazen Hrastic on September 13 to discuss ref B guidance on how Croatia could enhance its participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative. The GoC hopes to have its PSI interagency process and points of contact settled by the end of this year and would continue to seek guidance from Poland on this process. Preparations for negotiating a bilateral shipboarding agreement with the U.S. will, at best, be completed by the end of this year. The GoC will try to stress PSI-linked counter-WMD activities in its cooperative exercises with Adriatic Charter (A3) partners Albania and Macedonia. We will continue to urge that the GoC get its own house in order and establish points of contact beyond the MFA to facilitate Croatia's participation in PSI. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

2. (C) Hrastic elaborated on ref A points that the GoC would organize its PSI activities as a subset of the work of an interagency National Commission for WMD and non-proliferation issues involving representatives from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior (police), Defense, Economy (export control), and Finance (Customs) plus the intelligence services. The MFA would likely chair the Commission at the Assistant Minister level or higher. He said that the Government of Poland would be assisting in creating this Commission. Subsequently, Polish Embassy counselor Dariusz Wisniewski told us that PSI cooperation would be one of the main issues on the Polish agenda for President Mesic's upcoming visit to Warsaw Sept. 26-27. Wisniewski said that the Polish Undersecretary of State (no name given) will be visiting Zagreb in the first week of October in part to strengthen Polish-Croatian military-to-military and military-industrial relations, as well as to follow up on PSI consultations.

3. (C) Hrastic said that the GoC was just starting to review the model text for the bilateral shipboarding agreement. He speculated that it would be difficult to have full interagency agreement on the text before the end of this calendar year. Hrastic's personal view was that there would not be any serious difficulties with any of the main points in the agreement, but given the number of ministries and agencies involved, it would take some time to reach internal consensus. That said, Hrastic was confident that the agreement had political support, but that the GoC may ask the U.S. to help lobby to secure parliamentary approval when we reach that stage.

4. (C) In response to the upcoming schedule of PSI activities, Hrastic repeated the offer for Croatia to host some kind of exercise in the future. He said that as the GoC reviewed options for possible Adriatic Charter (A3) exercises, most thinking centered on WMD interdiction related activities which could naturally be of interest for other PSI participants in the Adriatic and/or Mediterranean region. This would be an important item for the A3 Foreign Ministers meeting which Croatia will host in November.

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